

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 176343

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/PAB:ASCHIFFERDECKER:MRC
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R 252225Z JUL 75
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY KABUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 176343

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, EINV, AF

SUBJECT: PANAM-ARIANA RELATIONS

REF: (A) KABUL 4787; (B) KABUL 4786; (C) STATE 172661

1. NEA/PAB PASSED CONTENTS REFTEL A TO TRIPPE AND DISCUSSED
SUBSTANCE REFTEL B AS SUGGESTED BY EMBASSY.
2. FYI. TRIPPE HAS NOT YET DECIDED WHEN TO COME TO KABUL
BUT IS CONTEMPLATING VISIT BEFORE END OF JULY. NEA/PAB
HAS RECEIVED PANAM LETTER DATED JULY 24, FORMALLY REQUESTING
USG OPINION ON COMPANY'S DESIRE TO SELL ALL OR PART OF ITS
49 PER CENT INTEREST. END FYI.
3. IN DISCUSSION JULY 25 WITH TRIPPE, DESKOFF EXPRESSED
EMBASSY/BENNETT PREFERENCE THAT COMPTROLLER DISPUTE NOT RPT
NOT BE LINKED TO PANAM'S DESIRE TO DIVEST . HE REITERATED
OUR INTEREST IN SEEING THAT AIRLINE CONTINUES TO BE
PROPERLY RUN AND THAT THIS MIGHT BE DIFFICULT IF PANAM'S
SHARES IN COMPANY FALL BELOW ONE-THIRD.
4. TRIPPE REPLIED THAT HE VIEWS NAJEEB'S ACTIONS ON
COMPTROLLER AS FUNDAMENTAL EFFORT TO GET OPERATIONAL
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PAGE 02 STATE 176343

CONTROL OF COMPANY, NOT RPT NOT AS NARROW FINANCIAL

DISPUTE. HE FEELS THERE VERY LITTLE PANAM CAN DO IF GOA THROUGH NAJEEB CHOOSES TO MODIFY 1957 AGREEMENT UNILATERALLY. IF HIS PERCEPTION ACCURATE, HE BELIEVES PANAM HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO TRY TO NEGOTIATE ITS WAY OUT OF ARIANA. HE SAID ARIANA HAS DEVELOPED INTO SOLID REGIONAL CARRIER UNDER PANAM TUTELAGE OVER PAST 18 YEARS AND THAT IF GOA, AS MAJORITY STOCKHOLDER, WANTS FULL CONTROL OVER ITS NATIONAL AIRLINE (FOR WHATEVER REASON), PANAM SHOULD NOT STAND IN WAY.

5. IT OF COURSE PROBABLE THAT TRIPPE'S VIEWS ON NATURE OF COMPTROLLER DISPUTE COLORED BY PANAM FINANCIAL NEEDS. WE INTEND TO DISCUSS ISSUE IN MORE DEPTH WITH PANAM MONDAY (WITH EB/CONSTABLE/RAU PARTICIPATION)IN RESPONSE TO PANAM LETTER. WILL ADVISE OUTCOME THESE DISCUSSIONS. IN MEANTIME WOULD WELCOME ANY FURTHER EMBASSY COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHAT ACTIONS WE MIGHT TAKE, INCLUDING RAISING ISSUE IN KABUL AT HIGHEST LEVEL. IF PANAM'S FINANCIAL IMPERATIVE TURNS OUT TO BE MOST PERSUASIVE ARGUMENT, WE MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER WHETHER OPTION OF TECHNICAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH PANAM OR OTHER AMERICAN CARRIER WOULD BE OF UTILITY IN HELPING TO MAINTAIN ACCEPTABLE AIRLINE STANDARDS. KISSINGER

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